

Office of the Mayor
City & County of San Francisco



Gavin Newsom

November 17, 2005

Dear Mayor,

As Mayor of San Francisco, I would like to share with you a landmark “sweatfree” ordinance that our city recently passed into law and encourage you to consider a similar initiative in your jurisdiction. Together our cities can pool our purchasing power in the marketplace to advance justice for taxpayers, consumers and workers who are subject to extreme exploitation in sweatshops.

It is well documented that millions of workers around the world are employed in sweatshops that maintain unsafe and exploitative employment practices, including inhumane working conditions and the use of child labor. These practices cause untold human suffering and diminish the stability of societies across the globe. In our role as market participants—purchasing billions of dollars of goods from private companies annually — US cities must be cognizant of the labor conditions supported by our actions. Our cities have an opportunity to address this critical issue by adopting purchasing policies that refuse to buy products made in such inhumane conditions.

The simple objective of our sweatfree ordinance is to ensure that our local taxpayer dollars do not subsidize sweatshops. The legislation establishes a procurement process that requires that our city only buy goods made by companies that adhere to basic standards of workplace safety and fairness.

Our San Francisco ordinance includes several provisions:

- A code of conduct required of all contractors and subcontractors reflecting the best of private sector and university anti-sweatshop codes now in effect.
- An independent monitor to uncover and resolve workplace abuses on city contracts anywhere in the world.
- A coordinator within our local government to ensure departments implement this procurement policy.
- A community-based advisory board to review and recommend improvements to the ordinance.
- \$100,000 annually in funding for enforcement.

The positive impact of each city's sweatfree policies is maximized by collaborating across jurisdictional boundaries. By consolidating our purchasing power and coordinating enforcement, our cities can better assure that anti-sweatshop policies achieve their intent. Along those lines, our city is interested in organizing a consortium of public jurisdictions to advance sweatfree policies.

I have instructed my staff to promote these policies in the policy and procurement forums they attend professionally. With this letter, I also am soliciting your interest in a mayors' consortium to collaborate on sweatfree ordinances. To express your interest or obtain more information, I encourage you to contact Wade Crowfoot in my office at 415-554-6640 or wade.crowfoot@sfgov.org.

In his book The End of Poverty, the United Nations economic advisor Jeffrey Sachs explains that "more than eight million people around the world die each year because they are too poor to stay alive. Our generation can choose to end that extreme poverty by 2025." The passage of sweatfree ordinances contributes to creating alternatives to the global poverty that stains our affluence and awakens our conscience. Please join me in our generation's challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gavin Newsom', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mayor Gavin Newsom